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January 22, 1968

Ramsey Pollard Preaches
At Ecumenical Meeting

By Larry Jerden

MEMPHIS (BP)--Ramsey Pollard, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church here, told more than 300 ministers and laymen attending an ecumenical meeting at a Catholic church that groups in agreement on doctrine should unite.

"But organic union does not mean unity," he warned, "and unity does not require organic union."

Pollard said that a new and better day is dawning when Christian groups can walk together and understand each other, but he flatly declared that one super church is not the will of God.

The former president of the Southern Baptist Convention preached at the second of a series of prayer services emphasizing Christian unity at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

He was the second Baptist minister to participate in the week of prayer sponsored by the National and World Council of Churches. R. Paul Caudill, pastor of First Baptist Church here, led in prayer.

"If two groups agree on doctrine and principles, they should unite and walk together," Pollard said. "But if they disagree, they should go their separate ways in brotherhood."

Pollard noted there were common enemies to all churches, both from within and from the outside, but assured the over-flow crowd, "you will not see the churches of Jesus Christ go down - they will live."

"Banks, businesses and nations have all failed, and we are in stormy times today, but the churches of Jesus have always come through," he said.

If churches of today are to meet their challenges, they need convictions and need to stand by them, he said.

"What made the Roman Catholic Church great was that its people had convictions - and they would not be moved from them," Pollard told the group.

Pollard called for churches to fight common enemies such as racial prejudice, alcoholism, and commercialized vice. He praised a local Catholic priest for leading a fight against obscene motion pictures, and called for others to follow his lead.

He then struck a solid note for separation of church and state.

"Every church of every denomination should pay its own way," he said. "Neither church nor state is free if the church taps the public treasury."

"A new day is dawning," Pollard concluded. "We have been forced to seek each other. As we travel the road together and understand each other, there will be a better day. But one super church is not the will of God."

"The one thing that is needed is that every person in this world have the spirit of Christ. When we come to Calvary," he said glancing at a suspended crucifix in the ornate Franciscan church, "we need to be filled with the love of God as shown in Christ. When you love Jesus Christ, you have to love the people he died for."

Reaction to the sermon varied among those promoting Christian unity in its different forms. Blair T. Hunt, pastor of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (Negro), said Pollard seemed "pessimistic concerning the union of all churches."

"Jesus prayed that we all might be one," Hunt contended. "He would not have prayed that way unless he saw the possibility, even the probability, that all would eventually be one. It is possible, probable, and if we worked toward that end, it will be an actual fact."

Robert Stegall, a Disciples of Christ minister, said he saw validity in the statement that organic union did not mean unity, even though other members of his denomination have been taking the initiative in the ecumenical movement.

One Catholic priest described Pollard as "sincere and honest," but said he wanted to study the statement concerning union and unity further.

"I've just never heard it put that way before," he said.

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Magazine Prepared to Help
Youth Get Ready For College

1/22/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--The first issue of a 60-page magazine for precollege young people, "On-to-College 1968," is scheduled for release in March by the student department of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Slated for high school seniors who plan to attend college, the magazine has articles dealing with morals, vocation, conflicting philosophies, campus religious activities, and church life.

"On-to-College 1968" does not claim to have all the answers, said Bill Junker, who edited the magazine for the Student department. It does, however, provide practical guidance in everyday living, including the subjects of finances, fraternities and sororities, marriage, clothes, study, roommates, and parents, Junker said.

Upon release, "On-to-College 1968" will be distributed through the regular church literature department channel of the board.

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